



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
April 3, 2014

For More Information, Contact:
Amy Schwartz, MPH
Immunization Surveillance Coord.
Division of Disease Control
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2335
E-mail: amschwartz@nd.gov

Change in Vaccines Required for Seventh Grade Students Next Fall

BISMARCK, N.D. –Two vaccines that were formerly required for students starting “middle school” will now be required for students starting the seventh grade, according to Amy Schwartz, Immunization Surveillance Coordinator for the North Dakota Department of Health. “Middle school” means different grades in different communities, which meant that all students were not receiving the same vaccines at the same times. “These changes were made to standardize immunization requirements,” Schwartz said. “We hope that requiring these vaccines for the seventh grade will be simpler for parents to remember.”

Students must now receive the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis) and the MCV4 (meningococcal conjugate vaccine) vaccines to begin the seventh grade, Schwartz indicated. These requirements are in addition to previously-required immunizations. Parents are urged to check with their child’s healthcare provider or local public health unit to make sure their immunizations are up to date well before school starts this fall. A complete list of school immunization requirements and recommendations is available at www.ndhealth.gov/Immunize/Schools-ChildCare/.

Valerie Fischer, Director of Safe and Healthy Schools for the Department of Public Instruction, said it was important for students to be current on their immunizations. “Diseases spread quickly in classrooms, so making sure children are immunized is the best way to make sure they are healthy and ready to learn,” Fischer said.

-more-

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@nd.gov

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The vaccines required for entry into the seventh grade protect children against diseases that are spread by bacteria. Because vaccines have made these diseases relatively rare, it's easy to forget how serious they can be.

The Tdap vaccination protects children against (1) tetanus, a disease that causes muscle spasms and death; (2) diphtheria, an infection that causes a sore throat, fever, swollen glands, muscle weakness and painful swallowing, and can result in death; (3) pertussis, or whooping cough, which can cause uncontrollable, violent coughing and can result in death; and (4) meningococcal meningitis, an inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord that can cause hearing loss, brain damage and death.

“Currently in North Dakota, most children are immunized appropriately before starting school. Those who are not properly immunized are more at risk for developing these preventable diseases,” added Schwartz. The middle school immunization rates for Tdap and meningococcal vaccines for the 2013-2014 school year were 72.4 percent and 69.8 percent respectively.

For more information, contact Amy Schwartz, North Dakota Department of Health, 701.328.2335.

– 30 –

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ndhealth or twitter at twitter.com/nddoh.